All Mechina participants complete comprehensive pre-program, mid-year and end-year written and oral evaluations, as individuals and as groups with Mechina staff. The purpose of our pre-program evaluation is to establish a baseline for comparison in our post-program evaluation. In addition to assessing participant satisfaction and general feedback regarding program components, evaluations aim to assess program impact on participants’ knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. We also conduct alumni surveys to assess long-term impact, as well as collect general feedback from alumni about the transition from the program into the IDF and their needs, interests, and desire for continued connection to BINA and the Mechina as well as to Jewish study and social action post-program.

**Quantitative Impact (gathered though evaluation surveys)**

Nearly all of the participants demonstrated an increase in the level of connection the participants feel to their Jewish identity, as well as feeling an increased connection to Jewish holidays and lifecycle events as part of their Jewish Secular identity.

95% demonstrated an increase in their connection to social justice and Tikkun Olam as well as expressing a commitment to carrying on volunteering/get involved in their local community in the future.

93% demonstrated that they feel better prepared for their IDF service and that as a result of their participation in the Mechina, they believe the time they spend in the army will be all the more meaningful.

95% of respondents said they would definitely stay involved with BINA, be that through continuing in BINA’s Nahal program (‘year of service’ for IDF soldiers), through attending events or continuing to learn at BINA.

91% of participants expressed a desire to continue their Jewish studies, and 95% would recommend the program to others.

**Qualitative Impact**

Gathered in focus-groups, group feedback sessions, written evaluations, and discussions with participants, our qualitative assessment has highlighted a few specific areas of impact, most notably that participants feel a sense of personal growth, a greater ability and desire to take responsibility, they feel they have learned to think critically, have gained new perspectives, are more task/goal orientated, more independent, more confident, have a deeper understanding of Israeli society, and a greater commitment to activism and social justice.

**Participant quotes:**

**How did your year at the Mechina affect your Jewish identity?**

“I now have a much greater understanding of who I am as a Jew, and the different options that are available to me. I feel much more connected and feel proud to be Jewish. This year also raised a lot of questions about Judaism and my Jewish Israeli identity, many questions that I haven’t yet found the answers to...I’m still looking, and I think that’s a good thing”
“I finally understand that it is legitimate to be a Secular Jew and it doesn’t mean that I am less than a religious Jew. It is a great feeling to feel comfortable with my Jewish identity after a lifetime spent searching for the feeling. I think that learning Torah and finding the connections to our lives allows us to understand that Judaism and Jewish texts are not just for religious Jews...”

How did your year at the Mechina and the time you spent living and learning with the GAP (international) program affect your feelings of connection to the Jewish People.

“Spending time with the GAP participants offered me the opportunity to learn about a new culture and approaches to Judaism. It allowed me to see Judaism through different eyes.”

“The period that we spent together really changed my thinking about diaspora Jews. I found out that their outlook on Judaism is completely different to anything I’ve heard in Israel. I also learned more about the challenges (as a Jew) of living outside of Israel and I also learned some English!!”

How did your year at the Mechina affect your approach to Social Action and how will this be expressed in the future?

“The Mechina program brought my attention to the injustices that are happening in Israeli society and also gave me the feeling that I can change ... I hope to be an activist in the future and the Mechina has played a huge part in this aspiration.”

“I think that the main influence this year had on my social perceptions is the understanding that if I want something to happen I do not have to wait and hope that someone will do it for me...I can do things myself even if it's scary. I learnt that I can ‘get things moving’ on my own.”